



Charlotte Mason's House of Education,  
Scale How, Ambleside, UK, 2009

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industrious and select reading. Continually he lived in companionship with high and rare excellence, with the great Hebrew poets and prophets, with the great poets of Greece and Rome. The Hebrew compositions were not in verse, and can be not inadequately represented by the grand measured prose of our English Bible. The verse of the poets of Greece and Rome no translation can adequately reproduce. Prose cannot have the power of verse; verse-translation may give whatever of charm is in the soul and talent of the translator himself, but never the specific charm of the verse and poet translated.

"In our race are thousands of readers, presently there will be millions, who know not a word of Greek and Latin, and will never learn those languages. If this host of readers are ever to gain any sense of the power and charm of the great poets of antiquity, their way to gain it is not through translations of the ancients but through the original poetry of Milton, who has the like power and charm because he has the like great style. Through Milton they may gain it, for, in conclusion, Milton is English. . . . He has made the great style no longer an exotic here; he has made it an inmate amongst us, a leaven, and a power. Nevertheless he and his hearers on both sides of the Atlantic are English and will remain English. The English race overspreads the world, and at the same time the ideal of an excellence the most high and the most rare abides a possession with it for ever."

## THE FÉSOLE CLUB PAPERS.

BY W. G. COLLINGWOOD.

### XXIII. ON PAINTING HEADS.

Now, as to the first aim at a solid head,—the materials needed, and general manner of work. Life-sized studies have always been our rule. Of landscapes, and figures in landscapes, we can paint only distant views; and the best of these are but shadows; for their light is not to be matched and their detail is not to be fathomed even at the luckiest of times and by the cleverest of artists. But stones and flowers and faces can all be imitated in their own colours and forms, and by the student should be so imitated. As much finish as the subject needs, but no miniature-painting,—that I take to be one of the laws of Fésole.

A head of average size can be painted for purposes of study on your "quarto" board or block (14 by 10 inches) paper, not rough and not hot-pressed (Whatman's N). Have big brushes, sable and hog-hair, and warm, transparent colours. Vandyke brown, burnt and raw sienna, pink or rose madder, are all perfect paints, in this sense. Light red, yellow ochre, cobalt, though not so transparent, are useful. Have the ordinary colour-notes at your command; but if you want a pocket-box for figure sketching you will do well with these four alone:—Prussian blue, burnt sienna, raw sienna, pink madder. And yet for general practice the full scale of colour-notes is easiest to use. It is no apology for a bad sketch to plead limitation either in time or materials.

Now as to the first stage, the drawing. You can indeed outline the general shape of the head, cheek and chin, and fix the forms of the hair as seen against background and face; but our use of the outline has always been to fix the contours of colour-masses, not to define details. In a head, the features are the details. They are not separate colour-masses, and



consequently are not to be defined with a hard outline. The important part of the drawing is here to be done by *modelling*, not by contours: any penning or pencilling of the features is likely to show too strongly through the tender colour and to harden the soft edges you need in your final result.

But you have not in vain gone through three or four years' practice of outlining and modelling. You *must* begin ultimately to swim without the corks; your brush-drawing, now, is no premature attempt. And even yet, if you begin at once with colour, you would probably make mistakes and waste much time and strength in mere correction. You must do as most good artists do—as they always have done—and make a black-and-white study first; not as the ground-work of your picture, but as a preliminary lesson to yourself. This is not wasted time; it is like an architect's plans for the house he is to build, and which he never could build right if he just went to the spot and bade the bricklayers set up a wall here and a wall there, without definite intent and secure foundation. When the house is built, he may burn his plans, but not till then.

The first day's work therefore is to make a study in soft black pencil, whose strokes will tell, without forcing out, from the distance of your walk-back. You pose your model,—say "three-quarter face," which on the whole is easier and more characteristic than profile or full-face,—and your paper is set up side by side with the sitter. You walk ten or twelve feet back, and look well at your subject, going over in your mind the forms you are about to draw. Mark the place of the eye about the middle of the paper. Then from your distant stand-point, consider the contour of the head, and imagine the same outline on your paper. When you can see it there in your mind's eye, walk up and lay it in, with firm, square drawing. Walk back and compare your outline with the model, and correct until it is right. Be very careful not to make the head larger than nature, which is a common fault; and give plenty of top and back to it: children's attempts are all face. Now revise the placing of the eye, and see that it comes neither too high nor too low, but about half-way from crown to chin. Make round the iris, and lay in with loose shading the general form of the eye-socket under the brow. In the same way get the *placing* of the features and

hair, attending to their position in the head, not to their own actual shapes, still less to any details. Darken the hair to distinguish it as a mass; and the background, to detach it from the head,—lighter or darker than the hair, as the case may need. Then consider the shading of the face, the parts that are in dark, as distinguished from the faint modelling that rounds the features in light. Outline the shade-masses, and lay them in, flat and firm.

By this time you will be ready for the help of the mirror. Walk back and compare your drawing with your model in a hand looking-glass (not a diminishing-glass), and you will probably find much to correct; which correct at once.

Finally you may put in a few touches to suggest the half-tone shading in the light part of the face, and pick out the shapes of the features. Notice that however dark the shading on the cheek or nose is (and being on a light and lustrous surface they can never be very dark), the real, emphatic darks are those which mark eyes, nose and mouth. Let those four features be always plainly visible in your finished head as they are in your first and rudest sketch of a face. This great principle of face drawing is often much confused by study from the cast, in which there is no colour to make the features tell as they do in nature.

The second day's work begins the painting. If you try to colour your black-and-white sketch all your shades will be muddy, and the result will be coarse. If you rub it light you will not only spoil the paper for tender tints, but the value of the sketch, as a record, will be lost. At another sitting the expression or the light may alter, and your groundwork will not tally with your model; so put that sketch by, and begin on a clean paper, trusting that the knowledge you have gained by it will remain to you, and the habit of hand to strike the curves and place the points will be formed,—just as in music the fingers accustom themselves to the difficult passage by force of repetition in practising. You are now qualified, as you were not before, to attempt painting without the guiding lines.

You proceed as you did with your drawing: that is to say, you place picture and model side by side, and before laying each touch with your brush, you paint it in imagination from



your point of view at a distance. Have a brush full of light red or burnt sienna to lay the main forms in a thin, faint, warm tint. Walk back four or five paces: note the place of the eye, and mark it down with a broad touch. Do not be afraid that this faint, warm tint will show through the blue of the iris (if it be a blue), for the last colour that is laid always tells most strongly. Then survey the contour of the head, and lay in the background, *leaving* the head in the middle of the tint. You don't draw an outline with the brush: you only leave an edge. Nor do you trouble about unevenness of tint in this first stage: you want the main forms to be quite correct—and you rectify the edge by washing away where necessary with a clean, hard, damp brush (an old sable or hog-hair such as is used in oil-painting), and by adding where adding is wanted, until at last the oval of the head is hacked and hewed into its true form. Then you place your darks to indicate features, hair, shade on the face, and so forth: but no half-tone modelling.

So far it is the black-and-white work over again, and it goes quickly and easily. The broad wet touches are more rapidly laid than pencil shading, and you almost know your work by heart in spite of some variety of attitude and expression, which make you glad you have not merely copied your first sketch. Now correct with the mirror, and give your sitter a rest while the colour dries.

The next attack will be to get the local colour and modelling by a single painting, so as to preserve the freshness which is the virtue of water colour. This stage is the main difficulty: if you can keep a grip of yourself, and carry out steadily, in this critical half hour, in spite of distraction, and idealism, and sentiment, the simple lessons you have learned, and know by heart, you will make a good painter.

Steady then! You *know* that your main forms are absolutely right. Sitter, please fix your eye on the point you were looking at before, and kindly make yourself comfortable and keep still. First step, background and drapery. Match the tint for background on a slip of paper; a little darker, for it will dry lighter. Big brush: lay the colour round the head; sweep its edge off with a clean damp brush, so that the softness of hair and cheek may not be spoilt. With the

same brush take out whatever light there is: perhaps a trifle behind the dark side of the head. There! Same process for collar and drapery.

Next step, hair. Match the tint: lay it with your hog-hair brush, fully dark; and take out lights. A little scratchiness is no harm at the edges, which must be softened into the background, and the hog-hair gives all the suggestion you need of texture.

Third step, flesh tints. While the hair dries, mix and match your tint for the forehead. You will want red, blue and yellow in that tint. You must now be ready to throw in a little colour with the brush, in the act of laying the tint: such as a little more grey on the temple, and when you come to the cheek and chin, a flush of red. The exact paints to use depend on the colour of your model; but match the prevailing colour at its deepest as nearly as you can. Lay it over; scoop out the lights with the damp, stiff, clean brush. If you have taken out too much light, never mind: don't retouch now, but wait. Walk back again, and match the shadowy part under the eyebrow; lay it down; walk back again and note the two or three lights that have to be taken out, to express the eyelids and eyeball; and make sure of them before the tint dries. Now, try the ear; and next treat the nose in the same way, dividing up your face into convenient masses (the exact area of which will depend on the lighting and position of the face). You have the mouth indicated: throw colour enough over it to make it tell, and to enable you to take out the modelling-lights of the lips. The throat, under the shadow of the jaw, may be done next; and last of all that most difficult part, the great sweep of cheek and chin, with its red flushing and grey half tones. But by now everything else is determined, and that makes this last mass the easier to match; and since you have painted the forehead and the throat, you feel more at home in flesh tints.

"Oh! a dreadful mess—a terrible mess!" That is what you may say when the paper is covered, unless you are luckier than most at a first attempt. But observe: you are very tired now and not in a fit condition to judge. You can't paint in this style without spending strength; and you must just put your work by till to-morrow.



Then, at the next sitting, scrutinize your beginning and your model together, and look at them in the mirror. You see that on the whole you have nearly got the right look, seen from a distance. Here you want light; there you want dark; and elsewhere a little trimming of edges where the paint has run. You know how to take off dark spots of colour with a damp clean brush, and how to fill in lights accidentally left, so that your tints need not be left as blotchy as they came at first. Some amount of retouching is likely to be necessary. But the aim of the lesson is to paint a head which, however unfinished, will be solid—the darks broad and the lights gradated; and soft—with no harsh or crude handling; and full of colour—not a mere tinted monochrome. And with this power gained you have gone up the three steps and in at the little door.

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In these four years we travelled over a wide field of study, from simple objects of still-life to landscape and the rudiments of composition and portraiture. We painted all manner of animals, and applied ourselves, not in vain, to figures and faces. Those members who were able to give reasonable attention to the work of the club, as set forth in the papers, and still more in the criticisms and instructions of the monthly portfolio, do not, I believe, regret the time they spent. They were taught few tricks of the trade; still less were they induced to imitate any popular mannerism. For the aim of this club was in accordance with the aim of this *Review*—to make drawing the means of a true education, by which, in learning to sketch, one may learn a more valuable art,—the Art of Seeing.

## "EDUCATION AND THE FORMATION OF CHARACTER."

THE following appeal, which appeared in the *Times* of January 22nd, is so germane to the teaching of the P.N.E.U. that we venture to recall it to our readers and to emphasise these wise utterances by reprinting the appeal in the *Parents' Review*. In the introductory leaflet of our Union we read: "Special stress is laid on the use of the word education, in its widest sense, not as meaning instruction only, but the development of the whole nature, on the underlying principle that 'character is everything.' The two functions of education (as it is understood by the Union), are the presentation of ideas and the formation of habits. These two, it will be seen, are the chief means at our disposal for the modification of character."

At this moment all the world wonders at the splendid exhibition of heroic moral qualities afforded to us by our Eastern allies. A prophet of their own discloses to us the secret of this fine national character. It is not spontaneous; the Japanese are, after all, but as other men. But every Japanese, of whatever rank, has been brought under a careful and inspiring system of moral education; inspiring, because the whole—courtesy, kindness, discipline, fortitude, courage, and all the amazing list of virtues which have come to stand in our minds for Japan—springs from the central idea of *loyalty*. The people waited upon their Emperor for certain precepts of morality; and these strong and simple precepts have been expanded and enforced in every school and college, every army corps and naval training school, illustrated by ethical teaching and examples from the literature of other nations, as well as from that of Japan.

"Can ye not discern the signs of the times?" said our Master; and here is a lesson, offered to all Christian peoples, on the efficacy of moral teaching; a lesson which we, who believe in the divine government of the world, may not suffer to pass unheeded.